

**For Immediate Release
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**Contact: Andrea Ewin Turner
(615) 532-5645 (office)
(615) 418-3703 (cell)**

DCS Releases Details of Wilson County internal affairs investigation initiated in November

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- Today, the Department of Children's Services released details of an internal affairs investigation of circumstances regarding a referral received on a 19-month old boy from Wilson County who ingested cocaine in November. The findings of the investigation indicate that the screening, assignment and response priority, and the investigation of the abuse and neglect allegation, violated department policies and procedures. As a result, employee disciplinary action has been taken.

"The only silver lining is that this child is alive in spite of our mishandling of his case," said DCS Commissioner Viola P. Miller. "No one will disagree that investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect is grueling, back-breaking work, but DCS has an obligation to protect the children of Tennessee. We have to have common sense, practice good judgment and conduct excellent casework, bottom line. Nothing less than our absolute best will do."

The findings indicate as follows:

- The referral received on October 30, 2004, indicating that a 19-month old boy had tested positive for cocaine, was incorrectly documented as being made on November 1 and was given a priority one response at that time. Departmental policy 14.3 requires that a referral, which is appropriate for investigation and meets the criteria for a priority one or priority two response should be assigned the same day it is received.
- No Child Protective Services employee saw the 19-month old child within the appropriate timeframe, a violation of departmental policy 14.5. The policy required that personnel establish in-person contact with the alleged victim/child, document a good faith effort to make contact with the alleged victim/child, or convene a Child Protective Investigative Team to coordinate activities, within 24 hours of receiving a priority one referral.

When the IA investigation began in November 2004, two child protective services employees were temporarily reassigned until the Internal Affairs investigation was complete. As a result of the findings, the Department suspended one employee for three days. The other employee is now deceased.

The child who tested positive for cocaine is currently in the physical and legal custody family members, as are two other siblings.

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